

BEWARE OF KENT HOVIND'S NEW EVANGELICAL PHILOSOPHY

June 2, 2003 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Kent Hovind has some excellent materials defending biblical creationism, but he also holds the unscriptural ecumenical philosophy. This is typical of parachurch ministries in general. They claim that they are responsible only for that part of the truth their particular ministry specializes in, whether it is evangelism (the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association), creation science (the Institute for Creation Research), prophecy (Jack Van Impe), family and youth (Bill Gothard and his Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts), music (i.e., many of the Southern Gospel groups), cults (the Watchman Fellowship), or education (ACE). By this philosophy, they are not responsible to preach the whole counsel of God nor are they responsible to separate from those who hold false doctrine and are compromising the Word of God.

Note the following warnings about Kent Hovind:

HOVIND A FUNDAMENTALIST? -- Dr. Kent Hovind's 1993-4 "Creation Science Evangelism" itinerary shows him speaking on many fundamentalist platforms, but it also has him speaking at over a half-dozen Southern Baptist churches, new evangelical organizations, a charismatic church, a Vineyard Christian Fellowship church, a Christian Coalition group, and a United Methodist Church. Fundamentalists may want to investigate this further before rescheduling Dr. Hovind (*Calvary Contender*, Sept. 15, 1994).

HOVIND'S ECUMENICAL ITINERARY -- Dr. Kent Hovind is a very popular "Creation Science Evangelist" and seems to have free rein in liberal, charismatic, new-evangelical, and -- sad to say -- fundamentalist pulpits [see 11-12/98 *Fundamentalist Digest*]. The CC editor had a 20-minute phone conversation with Hovind, April 22, 1996, in which he amazingly excused speaking in liberal church pulpits by saying when he goes into a United Methodist (e.g.) pulpit it becomes his pulpit while he's there! He compared this to Jonah going to Nineveh, and to Paul preaching in synagogues. He said Jesus said "By their fruits ye shall know them," and that souls were being saved ("fruit") in his meetings. [We asked if he would speak in a Catholic church and he said, "No, it's a cult!"] We asked if he had no concern about the confusion to his testimony caused by identifying with liberal and charismatic churches. He didn't seem concerned about what "fundamentalists" think, and said he was answerable to (and must please) only God. We were very saddened by his seeming rejection of Biblical separation commands, and the "end justifies the means" philosophy (*Calvary Contender*, March 1, 1999).

LETTER FROM BRIAN SNIDER, March 7, 2003

I wrote to Kent Hovind a few weeks ago and asked him about his speaking schedule. He wrote me a short personal note and then attached a letter which is his general disclaimer that he sends to everyone who asks this question. My response follows:

Dear Bro. Hovind,

I've read your letter a couple of times through, and you have truly been gifted with a quick wit and a sense for irony. Nevertheless, the reasons that you give for disobeying the Bible in this issue of separation are very flimsy and I'd like to share why I believe that.

1. In your letter, you imply that Biblical separation from those who have undermined the gospel does no good -- that it doesn't have any value. ... Not once in your letter did you have anything good to say about the doctrine of separation or those who would seek to practice it. In fact, you truly seem to scorn anything or anyone that smacks of being separatist. The Bible would not address issues of separation if there were no value in them. Separation is very valuable in that it protects the truth and it is a condemnation of those who refuse it. Failure to separate from those who have gone into doctrinal error is an endorsement of their errors. Furthermore, if you are helping them you are bidding them God speed and have become a partaker of their evil deeds. You ignore these warnings at your own peril and you harm others in the process. You embolden others to disobey the Lord and that is a serious error.
2. You imply that those who are interested in holiness and purity of truth are busybodies, meddlers and nosy. You are very condescending toward those who publish "gossip sheets," and you seem to be saying that your broader way is superior to their narrow way. I think you are very deceived about what pleases God. You are preaching pragmatism and I just don't find any Bible to support that kind of thinking among Christians. Jesuits, maybe, but not Christians. What's more, you seem to be saying that a ministry of warning has no value in this hour. How you could reach that conclusion is beyond me. Truth is sold pretty cheaply today and men who once stood for the truth are turning and denying it wholesale. Don't you care about these things? How is ignorance better than being aware of what is going on around you?
3. You imply that no question should ever be raised about anyone's ministry. When someone wrote to ask your position ... you replied that he really had no business asking you such questions, but that you would condescend to answer him anyway. Again, the implication is that the questions were without merit and were meddling.
4. You say that you are given freedom to speak on any subject when you preach in a pentecostal/charismatic church. How many times have you shared your conviction, which you expressed in this letter, that they are part of the end-times deception and apostasy of these last days? If you were as blunt with them as you are with me, would you continue to get speaking engagements in those circles? The fact that you are not known as being "against" the tongues movement is the very reason you are welcomed in their circles. They can count on you NOT to say anything in this regard. As someone who has spoken on the issue of tongues, I can tell you that you would not get

many invitations in evangelical circles, not to mention tongues-speaking churches. We live in an age when toleration is valued over truth.

5. You give several examples of inconsistency among Baptists, particularly regarding issues of separation. The implication is that if we can't be 100% consistent and perfect in this regard, we shouldn't try at all. I prefer an honest effort to a disregard of the doctrine altogether. It is a Bible doctrine, you know.

6. You offer up false examples: "Should the disciples have gone to the synagogues to preach to the Jews? Wouldn't weaker believers see them going in and assume they are in agreement with the Jews?" Throughout the book of Acts, we find numerous examples of the believers preaching in the synagogues, and presenting Jesus Christ in stark contrast to the Jewish law as a hope of salvation. They were beaten, stoned, chased out of town. How is that in any way similar to you going into a church that you disagree with and leaving on good terms because you never contradicted what you believe are their errors? How many times have you been beaten or stoned for your bold denunciations of false doctrine?

7. Like Billy Graham and many others, you seem to believe that the gospel message can somehow be extracted from the rest of the Bible and be made a separate, stand-alone message and that the rest of the Bible is sort of "take it or leave it" proposition. You say that "winning souls" is what is important, and fighting doctrinal wars is not. You are very much at odds with the scripture in this.

8. You start your letter by quoting "Judge not," and end your letter by saying, "the brother who shuns, rejects, excommunicates, blasts another thinks that: he is more spiritual -- closer to God; he is helping God maintain purity in the body of Christ; he is the one who gets to decide what everyone else should do." To tell you the truth, I think that the 1st point is a pretty judgmental statement. I'm still trying to figure out why you think there is something wrong with the 2nd one -- seems like a noble pursuit to me. And as for the 3rd point, could it possibly be that the Bible has addressed these issues and that there are some Christians who want to lift up Bible truth for other Christians?

9. You offer up the fact that "most fundamentalists" endorse you going into liberal or tongues-speaking churches and suggest that we ought to follow you and "most fundamentalists." Bro. Hovind, you might not have noticed, but most Christians of every stripe are going in the wrong direction today, and their numbers are multiplying so fast it is hard to keep up with them. The fact that someone is doing something and that "most people" agree with him is a warning sign to me.

Just a couple of further thoughts on your ministry. I am not aware of any example in the Bible of someone taking one area of scripture and only preaching that, as you are in practice of doing with the creationism seminars. The Bible is a cohesive book, and if you only preach creationism and the gospel, without really delving into other areas consistently, you only have half a message. Of what value is it to an erring group to learn more about an area that they are not weak in? Are you able to say with Paul that you have not shunned to declare unto them "all the counsel of God"?

I'm reminded of Watchman Fellowship, which has somewhat the same practice. When speaking to the Methodist church, they talk about the tongues movement. When speaking to the charismatic church, they talk about the New Age movement. In evangelical churches, they are asked to speak on the cults. They have a message for every audience, but they never give the medicine to the one that is sick.

You mentioned that the tongues movement is part of the end-times deception. You are right. And hand-in-hand with the charismatic movement is this newfound doctrine of the last 100 years of infiltration rather than separation. I cannot think of one thing which has been more harmful to the cause of truth in the last couple of generations than this faulty idea that doctrine doesn't matter as long as "souls are being saved."

If you are right, then independent, fundamental, separatists have been wrong all along. The way you believe, I think it would be far more honest of you to join the SBC.

Yours,
Brian Snider

CONCLUDING NOTE FROM BROTHER CLOUD

No ministry has the authority from God to focus on only part of the Bible while ignoring the rest, and no ministry has the authority to ignore separation from error. Separation is not a suggestion; it is a command. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and AVOID them" (Romans 16:17).

We need to teach biblical creationism, and we also need to teach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). We are to "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2), meaning all of it and not just part of it.

As we have seen, Hovind told Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, that he is merely doing what Jonah did in Ninevah or what Paul did in the synagogues. This is patent nonsense, and it is sad that any Bible believer would accept such a specious argument. Rather than preaching only on an assigned topic and avoiding other controversial matters, Jonah boldly preached at the very heart of Ninevah's sin. We can be assured that had Ninevah not repented, Jonah would not have been the featured conference speaker for the next annual Ninevah Days Outdoor Festival! Paul's bold preaching in the synagogues got him evicted more often than not and brought unspeakable trouble upon his head. Paul did not become a favorite synagogue conference speaker, and that is because he boldly preached the whole counsel of God and did not cut corners or narrow his message like ecumenists today. Jonah and Paul were not New Evangelicals, and if the big-name New Evangelicals would preach the whole counsel of God and rebuke the apostasy of the hour plainly, they would lose their popularity overnight.

Kent Hovind has been challenged about his compromise, and he has no excuse. He doesn't practice separation and he belittles those who do. Like every ecumenist, he misuses Matthew 7:1 and Romans 14:10. False teachers and compromisers misuse scripture by ignoring the context. Matthew 7 is not condemning all judgment but only hypocritical judgment. The context of Matthew 7:1-5 is hypocrisy. In the same sermon, Jesus taught us to beware of false prophets (Mat. 7:15-22), and to obey that requires the exercise of keen spiritual judgment in regard to doctrine and practice. By His own preaching, in fact, Jesus led the way with the first warning ministry in the New Testament churches! And as for Romans 14, the context deals with those things about which the Scriptures are silent, such as keeping holy days and dietary restrictions. The New Testament has no doctrine in regard to such things, and therefore each believer is at liberty before the Lord to follow his own conscience. In regard to such things, we have no right to judge one another. Romans 14 is not a blanket condemnation of judgment. Other passages explain that the believer has a responsibility to judge certain things. We are to judge all things (1 Cor. 2:15). We are to judge preaching (1 Cor. 14:29). We are to judge sin in the church (1 Cor. 5:3). We are to judge heretics and false teachers (Titus 3:10-11). We are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, which command requires the continual exercise of spiritual judgment pertaining to doctrine and practice.

Like all ecumenists, Hovind hides behind his ecumenical philosophy and claims that he loves the truth and that he is not a compromiser, but in fact, he has put his "ministry" ahead of faithfulness to the whole counsel of God. He has compromised the truth for the sake of a broader ministry. He told one pastor that he has a list of 225 churches on standby for his conferences and he can get a meeting at the drop of a hat.

Partial obedience has never been acceptable to God. King Saul was partially obedient. In fact, he was obedient in everything except one little matter, and for that God strongly rebuked him through the prophet Samuel and evicted him from the throne. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Samuel 15:23). Like all good ecumenists, Saul protested that judgment loudly and persistently, claiming to the very end that he had been faithful to God's Word. This is a loud warning to every man, because "the heart is deceitful above all things..." (Jer. 17:9).

Pastors must understand that when someone like Kent Hovind comes to a church to teach on creation science or some other single-note theme and yet ignores biblical separation, he will also bring this dangerous philosophy. By his example, he will influence church members to compromise the Word of God and will undermine a strong fundamentalist perspective in the church.

Hovind also promotes Contemporary Christian Music. In the April issue of "The Every-Once-In-A-While Newsletter," Hovind endorsed Christian rocker John Paul Holmes.

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